Did You Know?

Steroids

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Cheating to get a pumped-up body has its drawbacks. Steroids can be a fast track to dangerous side effects and frightening physical changes, like stunted height and hair loss.

AKA: Arnolds, gym candy, juice, pumpers, roids, stackers, weight trainers

What is it? Steroids are a class of drugs used to treat a wide variety of medical conditions. Estrogen and cortisone are some of the hormones steroids can replicate. Anabolic steroids are designed to imitate the hormone testosterone. Anabolic steroids are designed for medical use only, and to treat conditions like hypogonadism, delayed puberty and impotence. Anabolic steroids have a high potential for abuse, and only a very small number are approved for human and animal use in the U.S.

The Risks: Using steroids to cheat your way to a pumped-up body is not only dangerous to your body, but it's also against the law. The possession or sale of steroids without a valid prescription is illegal, and professional sports leagues like the NBA and NFL have banned the use of steroids because of their dangerous side effects. It's just not a fair way to play.

When you're young and your body is still developing, the effects of steroids can be dangerous and unattractive, and they can also be permanent. Men can get shrunken testicles, have difficulty or pain when urinating, develop breasts and lose hair. For women, it can stop your menstrual cycle, may cause excessive body and facial hair, leave you with male-pattern baldness and decrease your breast size.

LONG-TERM EFFECTS: Abusing steroids while you're still growing can cause a range of physical changes, including stunting your height permanently. But the long—term effects are not just superficial. Steroid use can lead to kidney impairment or failure; damage to the liver; high blood pressure, an increased risk of blood clotting and increases in LDL (bad cholesterol)—all three combined are a recipe for stroke and heart attack.

Source of Information: NIDA, SAMSHA, DEA